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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 29, 1996

NRC STAFF PROPOSES TO FINE WATERFORD $50,000

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has informed Entergy Operations, Inc. that it proposes to fine the company $50,000 for an apparent violation of NRC requirements at the Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3 nuclear power plant in Taft, La.

Entergy has 30 days to respond to the citation. During that time it may pay the civil penalty or protest it. If a protest is denied, the company may ask for a hearing.

This enforcement action results from an NRC inspection concluded on January 12 that found that the licensee, on several occasions over a period of several years, failed to correct a known design deficiency in the Auxiliary Component Cooling Water (ACCW) system that would allow air into the ACCW system and, under certain conditions, had the potential to render the system incapable of performing its intended safety function.

In a letter to Waterford officials, NRC Regional Administrator L. Joe Callan said, ". . . the NRC is concerned that, since 1986, plant personnel had multiple opportunities to correct the design problem but failed to do so. Instead of taking actions to correct the design problem, work-arounds were institutionalized in system operating procedures."

The violation has been categorized at Severity Level III in the NRC's four-level classification system. Level I is the most serious violation.

Entergy has taken a number of corrective actions since the discovery of this problem. They include running the ACCW pumps continuously to prevent air from entering the system until a system modification can be implemented and reviewing procedures for operating other safety-related fluid systems that would preclude a similar problem. In addition, Entergy has initiated actions to enhance corrective action programs to be sure plant personnel evaluate known deficiencies to determine the potential effect on plant systems and take appropriate action.

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